

Safety First:

A Guide for New Americans

Prepared by: MA Office for Refugees and Immigrants



This plan was developed to help you and your loved ones to be safe before, during and after an emergency event.

This guide will help you to:

- **Be AWARE** of different emergency types,
- **Be PREPARED** before, during and after an emergency
- **Be INFORMED** by having items or people you can reach out to if an emergency happens.



Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants (ORI)

What we do: Our office works with new Americans from all walks of life; this includes refugees, immigrants, asylees and others. We also work with state agencies and other organizations to help with integration of newcomers into Massachusetts.

Our goal is to promote the full participation of newcomers into the economic, social, and civic life of Massachusetts.

This guide was created to help you.

Emergencies happen everywhere, but how each person stays safe in an emergency can depend on their community and what information is shared in this

community over time. How to keep safe during an emergency can be different from country to country. This guide was made to reduce confusion around disasters, to let you know who can help you when you need it most, and to give important information to all people living in the Commonwealth.

To learn more about our office please visit:

<http://www.mass.gov/ori>

This guide has three sections:

Section I. Be Aware. This section defines different emergency types and gives examples of what you can do IF this type of emergency happens. (See pages 3- 16)

Section II. Be Prepared. This section provides information about how to make an emergency kit, in order for you to be safe if an emergency happens. (See pages 16- 18)

Section III. Be Informed. This section provides information about people or organizations that can help you in case an emergency happens. (See pages 19- 25)

BE AWARE of the most common forms of disasters.

Listed here are common Natural Disasters. These are emergencies that are caused by nature, such as storms.

Blackout (Power Outage)	<i>Disaster definition</i> When electricity in an area such as a city or a town does not work. This can affect a lot of people, and can last for a short amount of time, or for weeks. This may happen if power-lines get covered in a lot of heavy snow, or if power lines fall or break due to strong winds, during snowstorms, hurricanes, or during thunderstorms.
	<i>What can happen during this type of disaster?</i> You might stay in the dark without power for a short time like a few hours or for a day or more. The heat can stop and your stove can not

	<p>work.</p> <p><i>What can I do?</i></p> <p>Do not use fire or candles to light your home.</p> <p>Use a flashlight and keep extra batteries in a place you can find easily, even in the dark.</p> <p>Listen to a battery operated radio to get news about when power may be restored (turned back on).</p> <p>Make sure you have warm clothes and blankets, and enough water and food supplies.</p>
<p>Blizzard (winter storm)</p>	<p><i>Disaster definition</i></p> <p>In Massachusetts, it snows very during the winter months (Dec- March) often and sometimes for more than one or two days. Winter storms can also bring strong winds, ice and freezing</p>

	temperatures.
	<p><i>What can happen during this type of disaster?</i></p> <p>Roads may be slippery and make driving dangerous. Sidewalks and streets may have too much snow to walk safely on.</p> <p>The Governor of MA may require buses and trains to stop if it gets too dangerous.</p> <p>Heavy snow or ice on trees and power lines may cause power outages, no heat, or roof collapse.</p>
	<p><i>What can I do?</i></p> <p>Have enough food, warm clothes and blankets, and other supplies at home in case the power or heat goes out.</p> <p>Drive only if necessary and if you have been advised that</p>

	<p>it is safe.</p> <p><u>Do not use gas stoves to heat your home and do not use generators inside; this can cause serious injury, fire or death.</u></p>
Earthquake	<p><i>Disaster definition</i></p> <p>A natural disaster where the ground shakes quickly and often with a lot of force.</p>
	<p><i>What can happen during this type of disaster?</i></p> <p>Severe earthquakes can destroy houses, buildings.</p> <p>Earthquakes can cause harm and death, specifically if a person is injured due to falling debris.</p>
	<p><i>What can I do?</i></p> <p>If you are outside, stay away from buildings and any other structures that can fall and injure you.</p> <p>If you are in a moving car,</p>

	<p>stop when it is safe to do so, and stay away from trees or any structures that can fall on you or your vehicle.</p> <p>If you are inside, stay away from windows and anything that can fall and injure you. Be careful to keep cover your head.</p>
Flood	<p><i>Disaster definition</i></p> <p>A large amount of water that can damage property or make roads difficult or dangerous to drive.</p> <p>Floods can happen after heavy rains, or after large amounts of snow and ice melting.</p>
	<p><i>What can happen during this type of disaster?</i></p> <p>Water can enter your home or cover cars and roads.</p> <p>Roads can be closed.</p> <p>Floods can also damage buildings and cause cars,</p>

	trains and buses to stop working
	<p><i>What can I do?</i></p> <p>If there is a very heavy rainstorm, watch the news for a flood warning and wait for any evacuation news in case of severe flooding.</p> <p>Do NOT drive in a flooded area.</p> <p>If you are outside, go to higher land.</p> <p>If you are in a building in a flooded area, go to the highest floor of the building or home.</p>
Hurricane	<p><i>Disaster definition</i></p> <p>A severe tropical storm with thunder, rain, and strong wind.</p>
	<p><i>What can happen during this type of disaster?</i></p> <p>Strong winds, or items such</p>

	<p>as trash or other- debris may fly in the winds. Your electricity may go out or there may be lots of water (flooding).</p>
	<p><i>What can I do?</i></p> <p>Have a “kit” with canned food, a can opener, and other supplies such as batteries, a flash light, candles, matches, or other important things if it is necessary for you to stay indoors.</p> <p>Listen to radio or TV for emergency information. Call someone you know or one of the emergency numbers given in this guide.</p>
<p>Thunderstorm</p>	<p><i>Disaster definition</i></p> <p>Weather that produces lightning, and has the potential to produce associated dangers such as tornadoes, destructive winds, hail and flash flooding.</p>
	<p><i>What can happen during</i></p>

	<p><i>this type of disaster?</i></p> <p>They produce loud roars, lightning and heavy rain, and have the potential to produce similar dangerous results like tornadoes, destructive winds, hail and flash flooding.</p>
	<p><i>What can I do?</i></p> <p>Do not go out if there is a thunderstorm. If you are outside, go inside the closest building. If you are on open land, go inside your car or to lower land, and stay away from water areas like rivers, seas and oceans.</p>
<p>Tornado</p>	<p><i>Disaster definition</i></p> <p>These are strong storms that have clouds that rotate or move around in circles. The winds from these storms are very strong and can be devastating.</p>
	<p><i>What can happen during this type of disaster?</i></p>

	<p>Tornadoes can cause deaths and can destroy homes, buildings and other large areas in very short periods of time.</p>
	<p><i>What can I do?</i></p> <p>When you are inside, go to the basement or the lowest part of the house or building. Stay away from windows. Do not open doors and windows. If you are outside, try to get into a building, a firm shelter.</p>
<p>Wildfire</p>	<p><i>Disaster definition</i></p> <p>A type of fire that often begins unnoticed. They are usually triggered by lightning or accidents. They spread quickly, igniting brush, trees, and homes.</p>
	<p><i>What can happen during this type of disaster?</i></p> <p>Large areas like forests,</p>

	<p>bushes, and wood houses are burning on fire. The fire is spreading quickly. Burning trees may fall down. Water nearby the fire may be contaminated and not good to drink or wash dishes.</p>
	<p><i>What can I do?</i></p> <p>Do not make any type of fire inside or outside to warm yourself in the winter.</p> <p>Do not put plastic, paper bags, or any other items that can catch fire close to stoves.</p> <p>If you are outside during a wildfire, move away from the area.</p> <p>Follow police orders if told to leave the area or your home (evacuation).</p>

Listed here are Man-Made Disasters. These are emergencies that are caused by individuals or groups of people.

**Hazardous
Materials Spill**

Disaster definition

Chemical materials which are naturally explosive, flammable and radioactive. Such materials can cause a potential risk to life, health and property if they are released.

What can happen during this type of disaster?

These materials are shipped daily on highways, trains, ships and pipelines. They can be risky and explode if they leak from the tanks or catch fire during their use, production, storage, or transportation.

What can I do?

Have a personal emergency contact list. Listen to sirens, radio and TV for instructions or contact someone from your emergency contact list. If you are at risk, call 911.

Disaster definition

There are several nuclear

**Nuclear
Emergency**

power plants in or near Massachusetts. If an emergency occurred at one of them, they can put residents at severe danger. These plants are where electric power is generated.

What can happen during this type of disaster?

You may hear loud and special sounds of a siren or horn. The emergency can sometimes be controlled.

Or, you may need to leave your house and go to a specific place officials may tell you.

What can I do?

If you hear Emergency Sirens/Horns, you should listen to radio and TV and do what the emergency officials say. Call people you know to learn more about what is going on. If local authorities tell you to evacuate and go to specific

	places or shelters, please do so.
Terrorism	<p><i>Disaster definition</i></p> <p>It is when violence or fear is used by one or more people to intimidate individuals, societies or governments. People who do terrorism are called <i>terrorists</i>.</p>
	<p><i>What can happen during this type of disaster?</i></p> <p>There can be unknown attacks, assassination, or kidnapping of people. Also, there can be severe destruction due to small or big explosions.</p>
	<p><i>What can I do?</i></p> <p>We cannot often expect terrorism. While the US government works hard to keep US residents safe and healthy, it is always important to keep our eyes open and beware of such potential activity. Always be aware of conspicuous or unusual</p>

	behavior. Do not accept packages from strangers. Do not leave luggage unattended.
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For more information about disasters and being safe, please visit:

<http://www.ready.gov/be-informed> & <http://www.mass.gov/mema>



BE PREPARED Before emergencies happen, in order to avoid any harmful risk.

Make an Emergency Kit. Many kits have that are common and easy to get. You can decide what should be in your kit for you and your family. A basic emergency supply kit could include the following items:

- Water, one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and cleaning and brushing teeth,
- Food, at least a three-day supply of canned food,
- Battery-powered radio and extra batteries,
- Flashlight and extra batteries,
- First aid kit (with medicine or medical supplies),
- Whistle to signal for help,
- Dust mask to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place,
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities (gas or other utilities for safety),

- Can opener for food (manual, not electric),



Once you have gathered the supplies for a basic emergency kit, you may want to consider adding the following items:

- Medicine, medical supplies and glasses
- Infant formula and diapers
- Pet food and extra water for your pet
- Cash or traveler's checks and change
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records in a waterproof, portable container.
- Warm blankets for each person
- Complete change of clothing including a long sleeved shirt, long pants and sturdy shoes.
- Household bleach and a medicine dropper – When diluted, nine parts water to one part bleach, bleach can be used as a disinfectant. Or in an emergency, you can use it to treat water by using 16 drops of regular household liquid bleach per gallon of water. Do not use scented, color safe or bleaches with added cleaners.

- Fire extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items
- Paper cups, plates, paper towels and plastic utensils
- Paper and pencil
- Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children

**BE INFORMED Of the Important Emergency
Contacts who can assist you during an emergency.**

The Number You Should Call	Who You Should Call?	When You Should Call?
911	Police, Fire, Ambulance	When You Face a Dangerous Emergency Situation Wherever You are in United States.
211	Massachusetts 211	When you need information about critical health and human services available in your community, such as government benefits and services, nonprofit organizations, support groups, volunteer opportunities, donation programs, and other local resources.

1-888-872-5458	Massachusetts Terrorism Tip Line	If You Would Like to Learn More About Protecting Yourself Against Terrorism. Or, If You Have to Tell Police About a Suspicious Terrorist Activity.
1-800-222-1222	Poison Control	If you think someone has been poisoned. The poison control center has interpreters for many languages.

You should also Have a List of Personal Emergency Contacts. These can be Your Family Members, Friends, Neighbors, Community Center, Doctor, or Case Worker.

Name of Person	Relationship to You	Phone Number

Name of Person	Relationship to You	Phone Number

If you have access to the Internet, you can visit the following websites for more information be safe during emergencies:

Name of the Agency	The Website	Languages available?
Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency	www.mass.gov/mema/ready	English
Massachusetts Department of Public Health	www.mass.gov/dph/ready	English and "Internet Translation" Button Available for a variety of other languages.
Mass211	www.mass211.org	English
Federal Emergency Management Agency	www.ready.gov	Arabic, English, Spanish, French, Haitian Creole, Russian, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Korean, Chinese, Japanese, Hindi, Urdu.
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Emergency Preparedness	www.bt.cdc.gov	English, Spanish, other languages vary depending on the topic

Healthy Roads Media	www.healthyroadsmedia.org	English, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Amharic, Bhutanese, Bosnian, Burmese, Farsi, French, Hmong, Karen, Khmer, Kirundi, Korean, Kurdish, Liberian English, Laotian, Nepali, Russian, Somali, Swahili, Tagalog, Tigrinya, Vietnamese.
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If You Have Any Questions that You Couldn't Find Answers Above, You Can Contact One of the Following Refugee and Immigrant Service Agencies. Contact the Agency which is Closest to You Are Living Now.

Name of the Agency	Location of the Agency	Agency Address	Agency Phone Number
International Institute of New England	Boston	1 Milk Street, 4th Floor, Boston, MA 02109	617-695-9990

Catholic Charities of Boston	Boston	51 Sleeper Street, Boston, MA 02210	617-464-9100
International Institute of New England	Lowell	155 Merrimack Street, 5th Floor, Lowell, MA 01852	978-459-9031
Jewish Family Service of Western Mass	Springfield	15 Lenox St, Springfield, MA 01108	413-737-2601
Lutheran Social Services	West Springfield	593 Main Street, Springfield, MA 01089	413-787-0725
Lutheran Social Services	Worcester	51 Union Street, Worcester, MA	508-754-1121
Refugee & Immigrant Assistance Center	Lynn	20 Wheeler Street, Suite 401, Lynn, MA, 01902	781-593-0100